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Joël Blanchard, ed. with Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Antoine Calvet, *Philippe de Mézières, rhétorique et poétique*. Cahiers d'Humanisme et Renaissance 157. Geneva : Droz, 2019. 328 pp. Bibliography and index. €39 (pb). ISBN 978-2-600-05962-6.

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Author, crusader, and diplomat, Philippe de Mézières engaged with all the key issues tearing apart the fabric of late medieval Europe, from the transformation and role of chivalry, the religious crisis and reformation, socio-political upheavals, to the rise of humanism. Therefore, a great deal of scholarship on that author has focused on such engagement and the significance of his voice during that time of change. The recent volume co-edited by Joël Blanchard and Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski that focused on Philippe de Mézières and Europe (Droz, 2017) attests to the relevance of Philippe's works in that respect. However, *Philippe de Mézières, rhétorique et poétique*, also edited by Joël Blanchard in collaboration with Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Antoine Calvet, covers aspects of Philippe de Mézières's works that have been less explored in their own right, namely his poetics. An examination of Philippe's rhetorical strategies and overall writing style helps to better resituate the relevance of this quite prolific bilingual author (French and Latin) in the context of the nascent humanistic movement of the later Middle Ages. As a result, and rather logically, most of the thirteen essays that compose the present volume offer close reading analysis of Philippe's works and invite the readers to pay particular attention to the vibrancy of Philippe's writing forms and structure, the subtlety and richness of his language. These essays are organized according to five categories: "La rhétorique dans tous ses états," "Stratégies oratoires," "L'herméneutique méziérienne," "Théâtralité et rite," and "Poétique de l'alchimie chez Philippe de Mézières?"

The first category, on rhetoric, comprises two essays. The first, composed by Maria Colombo Timelli and entitled "*Qui tient le moien, il va le seur chemin* (*Songe du viel pelerin*, 1133, 28-29): Les 'proverbes' dans le *Songe* de Philippe de Mézières," revisits the various and rich ways Philippe made use of the proverbs presented in the *Songe*. Colombo Timelli's essay shows how Philippe's interesting use of the proverbs resembles that of preachers, contributing to the universal message, as well as the didactic nature of Philippe's opus. The list and references of proverbs provided in an annex constitute a useful tool for further research. Michelle Szkilnik's "Rimes, rythmes et couleurs de rhétorique dans le *Songe du Viel Pelerin*" is another enlightening study of Philippe's rhetorical approaches in the *Songe*. Whereas Philippe is typically presented as having taken a stand in defense of prose, Szkilnik brings our attention to the sophisticated ways Philippe nonetheless crafted a language sensitive to the effect of rhymes, and overall to the musicality of his prose, to the extent of his transforming the syntax to create such effects. Szkilnik concludes

interestingly that this could correspond to a common practice in Latin, i.e. the use of rhythmic prose.

The second category, which focuses on the oratory qualities of Philippe's works, opens with Sébastien Cazalas's "'Je suis triboullée jusques au ventre et au cuer.' L'écriture de la lamentation dans quelques œuvres politiques de Philippe de Mézières et de Jean Juvénal des Ursins." Cazalas's study focuses on the writing of lament or *passion triste* as inherited from both the classical and biblical traditions. This is found in some of Philippe's open letters, one of his preferred genres in which to display such oratory effect. Cazala also explores their interplay with some of the letters written by Jean Juvénal des Ursins. Although they wrote some ten years apart, Cazalas makes a valid case for offering a comparison between these two writers who both adopt medical metaphors as they react to the political circumstances generated by the Anglo-French conflicts. In an essay entitled "Par-delà la tristesse et l'indignation: modulations affectives et portée de la voix satirique chez Philippe de Mézières," Jean-Claude Mühlethaler pursues Philippe's use of affect in the political sphere, as it is manifested more particularly by the writing of satire. Reminding us that any satirical elements of a text are to be related to expressions of indignation, Mühlethaler goes on to show how those elements are more particularly at work in Philippe's *Chevalerie de la Passion*, *Epistre lamentable*, and the *Songe*, and can function as a powerful *discours second* as in the *Epistre lamentable*. This study, which analyzes the unique way Philippe makes use of satire, also offers judicious insights into the works of other contemporary authors, in particular Honoré Bovet. Estelle Doudet's essay, "Philippe de Mézières, orateur: les nouveaux territoires d'une posture d'auteur," examines the notion of literary territory as the engagement of variable interactions between writer, reader, and work. Philippe is shown to revisit systematically such interactions in several of his works. For Doudet, Philippe's posture parts with the medieval clerical tradition of *auctoritas* and becomes closer to that of the orator in the classical tradition, but not without ambivalence. This essay closes the second category by showing how Philippe's various postures contributed to contemporary reflections upon what Doudet calls "une parole-action" (p. 133).

The third category on hermeneutics opens with Philippe Frieden's essay "Exercices de lecture: usages de l'allégorie dans le *Songe du Viel Pelerin*." This essay revisits how Philippe's *Songe* engages in part with the allegorical tradition of the *Romance of the Rose* while being significantly different, especially regarding the unicity of meaning and the use of allegoresis, and overall on the various strategies to engage and guide the reader(s), ultimately Charles VI, for whom the work is intended. Here, Frieden proposes insightful comparisons with some of the works by fifteenth-century authors, such as Christine de Pizan and Alain Chartier, that take the form of a debate, and thus engage with a plurality of viewpoints and interpretations. The next essay by Daisy Delogu, entitled "Allegory, Semiotics, and Salvation: the parable of the talents in the *Songe du viel pelerin*," fleshes out Philippe's intellectual engagement with the Scriptures and overall with exegetical reading practices in the *Songe*. This essay examines how the retelling of the biblical parable of the talents at the beginning of the *Songe* functions as a guidance for reading the text as a whole. Delogu bases her argument on the essential analogy between language and coinage in the *Songe*. She demonstrates how indeed semiotics found in language as well as material culture connects with economic references, whether metaphorical or actual, and ultimately with the spiritual journey a Christian, such as Philippe himself, must undertake, but which is only made possible by "good" reading practices. Andrea Tarnowski in "Philippe de Mézières, All at Once (Allegory and the Visual)" also makes a convincing case for the relevance of Philippe's figurative imagination and visual effects, such as the table of the *Songe*, the tabula of the *Oratio Tragedica*,

or the illuminations in the Arsenal manuscript 2682-2683. Tarnowski argues that those are well ordered and intended to be integral both to the experience of reading Philippe's works and to his idea of a *parler moral*, which can be connected to his main lifetime objective: the creation of a knightly order to regain the Holy Land and contribute to the reformation of Christendom. Tarnowski refers back to the *Epistre Lamentable's* metaphor of the "cité portative" (p. 187) as being a key image central to Philippe's thoughts, which similarly pulls readers into one morally directed reading practice and single Truth.

The fourth part of the volume turns to theatricality and rituals. In "La devise et forme singuliere de la fin du povre pelerin': ritual configuration and rhetorical invention in Philippe de Mézières's *Testament* (1392)," Helen Swift invites us to consider Philippe's unique concern with and staging of his dying self in the work known as the *Testament*. While resituating this concern within a wider late medieval discourse on death and testamentary literature, Swift shows how, in his attention to the details of the ceremonial of the burial as well as the post-mortem dealing of the body and soul, Philippe employed unique rhetorical techniques to approach the subject matter. This essay also makes a case for the unique place such a text had within Philippe's oeuvres, between the *Songe* and the *epitaph*, and how it corroborates Philippe's interest in the teleology of one Christian's lifetime being a pilgrimage. "Griselda, The Musical? From *Le Livre de la Vertu du Sacrement de Mariage* to *L'Estoire de Griseldis en rimes et par personnages*" by Adrian Armstrong is another engaging essay that explores rhetoric as well as the aesthetic of literary *mise en scène*, specifically in the less-studied adaptation of Philippe's version of the *estoire de Griseldis*. This essay explores more precisely how the particular language and structure of the play, whether this play was ever intended to be performed, created theatrical as well as musical effects. Armstrong based this argument on the fact that versification is related to performance, reminding us that by the 1390s, verse is the "standard medium for French-language drama" (p. 228), and makes a convincing case for the further study of this play by those interested in speech-acts and adaptation studies.

The fifth and last category focuses on the postures of the alchemist and apothecary in Philippe's works. In "L'écriture du miroir du prince au XIVE siècle: *Le Songe du Viel Pèlerin* de Philippe de Mézières et le *Secretum secretorum*," Catherine Gaullier-Bougassas revisits the *Songe* as a mirror of princes in light of its possible interplay with one of the most circulated medieval texts of the genre, the pseudo-aristotelian *Secretum secretorum*, which Philippe mentions in the *Songe*. The *Secretum secretorum* depicts an exemplary relationship between the ruler Alexander and the philosopher-teacher Aristotle and argues for the acquisition of scientific knowledge for rulers: two aspects which may have been appealing for rulers and clerics alike and contributed to the medieval success of this text. The passage in the *Secretum secretorum* on the occult sciences, especially on astrology and alchemy, which Philippe condemns, may be essential to better understanding how, in the *Songe*, Philippe made abundant use of the central image of what he sees as the good spiritual alchemy versus the false material and unholy one. Next, Isabelle Fabre's "Le 'Viel Solitaire' en son miroir : la poétique du *Livre de la Vertu du Sacrement de Mariage* de Philippe de Mézières (c. 1385-1389) à la lumière du *Roman de la Rose*" discusses Philippe's literary engagement with the *Romance of the Rose* in the *Livre de la Vertu du Sacrement de Mariage*. This essay exposes the rich ways Philippe re-invents some of the motifs of the *Rose*, such as the garden, the mirror of the fountain, and the precious stones, and how the garden is transformed into a medicinal spiritual garden of the Scriptures, in which Philippe's figure as "povre jardinier" (p. 276) and apothecary takes its full meaning and overall guides the readers into the exposition of a mirror of marriage that is a spiritual marriage as a mirror of the soul. Finally, Joël Blanchard

and Antoine Calvet's contribution closes this last category as well as the volume with a title in the form of a question "L'apothicairerie de Philippe de Mézières, creuset d'une poétique nouvelle?" This last contribution may very well serve as a conclusion. It begins with the emblematic image taken from the *Oratio tragedica* of Philippe, who presents himself as the apothecary at the convent of the Celestins, where he in fact sojourned at the end of his life. In fact, most of Philippe's works discussed in this volume devoted to his literary creativity seem to allude to his experience at the convent, as a unique locus of intellectual and spiritual reflection for this author. Thus, the *Oratio tragedica* may be exemplary of Philippe's poetics that oscillate between the allegories of the poets and the theologians, between action and contemplation, between lament over the failure of his crusading ideals and his tireless hopes for the transformation and mutation of Christendom. His rhetoric and poetics all seem to reflect Philippe's interest in the multifaceted ways to envision transformation and mutation at the turn of the fourteenth century. His writing can be seen as a reflection of his time or the particular concern of a poet who envisions himself as an alchemist and fashions for himself the image of a newer spokesperson, the orator. A useful index of people, places, and notions following a focused bibliography closes the volume.

This is a rich, well-crafted collection of essays, in which most contributions have correspondence with one another, regardless of the categories under which they are organized. The coherence of the volume as a whole may also be attributed to Philippe's own coherence as a writer and thinker. Driven by the desire to be read or heard, Philippe was certainly an explorer of forms, rhetorical strategies, and sensibilities, who ventures to that effect to adopt, as Blanchard puts it, "plusieurs 'postures' qui sont autant de masques ou de figures projetées" (p. 16), but which all point to the same preoccupations Philippe had with a reformation of Church and society, and its interplay with the necessary mutation of the Christian self as a lifetime condition. So, overall, this volume represents an invaluable contribution to Mézièrian studies, and it makes a compelling case for the originality of Philippe's writing in the context of late fourteenth-century France. One can envision how several essays in this volume will serve as a reference or open up possibilities for further research, such as, for example, the engagement of Philippe's works with prose and verse at a time when poets, such as Guillaume de Machaut or Eustache Deschamps forged groundbreaking theories on the art of composing without music, or the interplay his works present with sermons and vernacular devotion for the laity, positing him as a precursor of Jean Gerson and other theologians of the fifteenth century. Therefore, another important takeaway from this volume is how much his works are not only in dialogue with one another, but also in a dialogue with several prominent late-medieval voices, such as Nicole Oresme, Eustache Deschamps, Honoré Bovet, Jean Juvenal des Ursins, Christine de Pizan, Alain Chartier, Jean Gerson, and even beyond France, especially in Italy with Dante and Petrarch. From proverbial writing to the allegory or exegetical approach to texts, Philippe seems to have revisited all the major classical and medieval literary traditions. Erudite, a careful writer as well as an astute reader, Philippe posited himself as a pioneer of humanistic rhetoric in the French literary tradition, particularly the art of oration, well before the sixteenth century.

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